

THE JACOBS REPORT

GILDA Z. JACOBS
MICHIGAN SENATE
Assistant Democratic Floor Leader
FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

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Contact: Matt Levin
(517) 373-7888

SENATE GOP PLAN POPULAR . . . WITH SENATE GOP **Governor, House, Business Community Not Impressed**

Senate Republicans pushed a six-year, \$1-\$2.4 billion tax cut plan through the upper chamber despite growing criticisms from just about everyone else at the Capitol.

Senate Democrats voted against all but one of the 11 bills in the “Renew Michigan” package, which has drawn additional opposition from Michigan’s manufacturing sector, House Republican and Democratic leadership, the Michigan Chamber and Governor Jennifer Granholm.

The Senate GOP plan represents a net tax cut of around \$500 million should the state economy improve. Democrats criticized the timing of the cuts while Republican constituencies question the inconsequential “break” that actually represents a rate cut of 0.6 percent, or six cents per every \$1,000.

Gov. Granholm described the plan as “dead on arrival,” while House Speaker Craig DeRoche (R-Novi) questioned the implementation timetable, as well as the level of the cuts.

Democrats and entities that rely on the state for money were also upset about the legislation’s statutory limits on how much government can spend (the rate of inflation plus 1 percent plus \$50 million), contending that universities, local governments and health care for the poor will be decimated.

Conservatives, while supportive of the restraint on government spending, want tax cuts for the purpose of spurring the economy now, rather than implementing them after the economy has turned around.

All 11 bills in the package passed the Senate on a party-line vote, except for a bill that would require prisoners to pay sales tax on purchases made at the prison store, which passed with bi-partisan support.

Senate Democrats, in protest of the package’s fast-track through the chamber, invoked a rarely used parliamentary maneuver to require a full reading of each bill. The business of the Senate was slowed to a crawl as Secretary Carol Viventi and Assistant Secretary Pam Nyquist read dozens of pages of tax changes.

The Democrats also withheld enough votes to deny the bills immediate effect.

SENATE DEMOCRATS: PROTECT MICHIGAN'S WATER

Jacobs Co-sponsors Package

Following months of careful preparation, including a series of public hearings and meetings with citizens, public interest groups, and stakeholders, Senate Democrats have introduced a package of bills that will establish clear rules for water use and withdrawals while protecting the manufacturing and agriculture industries.

“Water will be the oil of the 21st Century,” said Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor), minority vice chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. “It is Michigan’s most important natural resource, and we need strong laws that prevent unregulated shipping of Great Lakes water out of the basin.”

Included in Senate Democrats’ new water package are the following five bills:

SB 854 amends Inland Lakes and Streams Act to require a permit for water withdrawals that have adverse environmental impacts to lakes and streams.

SB 855 will protect Michigan’s water from privatization by requiring legislative approval for a private water supplier that wants to compete with a public water supplier and water bottlers that want to ship water outside of Great Lakes basin.

SB 856 creates a requirement for public comment for proposed diversions.

SB 857 amends the Safe Drinking Water Act by requiring the DEQ to consider adverse environmental impacts from projects that apply for a permit.

SB 858 encourages water conservation by requiring large water users to certify that they are using water conservation practices appropriate to their industry.

Critics point out that the GOP water management proposal continues to ignore the issue of water diversion from the Great Lakes. Additionally, Democrats repeated their call for the action on Governor Granholm’s Water Legacy Act. The Governor’s proposal was first introduced back in March of 2004.

DLEG WEBSITE ADDS PROPERTY SEARCH

Consumers Can Search for Tax Reverted Properties to Purchase

The Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) has added an exciting new facet to its website. DLEG’s Land Bank Fast Track Authority, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Information Technology (DIT), now makes it easier for consumers to find information about available properties and help expedite the sale of property.

The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority was created in 2003 with the mission of returning blighted tax reverted properties to productive and economically viable use. The Authority is directed to dispose of property in a manner and for an amount that is considered proper, fair, valuable, and in the best interest of the community.

“This new online feature will free up Land Bank Fast Track Authority staff, who answer several calls a day from people inquiring about property availability. Now they can devote more of their time to

expediting the sale of properties, which ultimately benefits our communities and neighborhoods,” Director David Hollister said. “This new online service is in keeping with the authority’s mission of ridding our urban areas of blighted properties and encouraging housing and business investments as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

Along with the capabilities to search the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority's website for available properties, the website also has links to other counties and cities throughout Michigan that have property search capabilities in their regions, including the cities of Flint, Detroit, Saginaw as well as Hillsdale and Wayne counties.

“Our customers now have access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to search for available properties. They no longer have to call, fax or mail a request for lists of properties – the information is now just a click away,” DIT Director Teri Takai said. “Investors, entrepreneurs, consumers, and local officials are going to love the ease and convenience of obtaining this vital information online.”

Additional information about the Property Search is available by visiting <http://www.michigan.gov/dleg> and clicking on the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority icon on the left-hand side of the page.

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

This newsletter is produced in single-space form in order to save paper and transmission costs.

Matthew J. Levin
Legislative Director
Senator Gilda Z. Jacobs
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
(517) 373-7888
mlevin@senate.michigan.gov